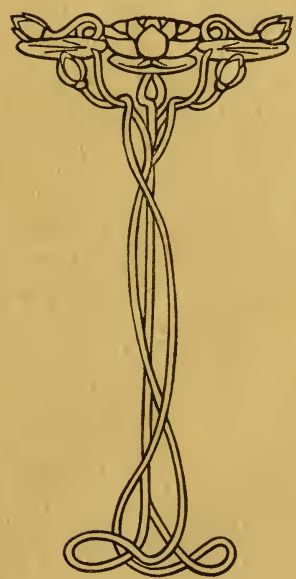


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MY RELIGION

By

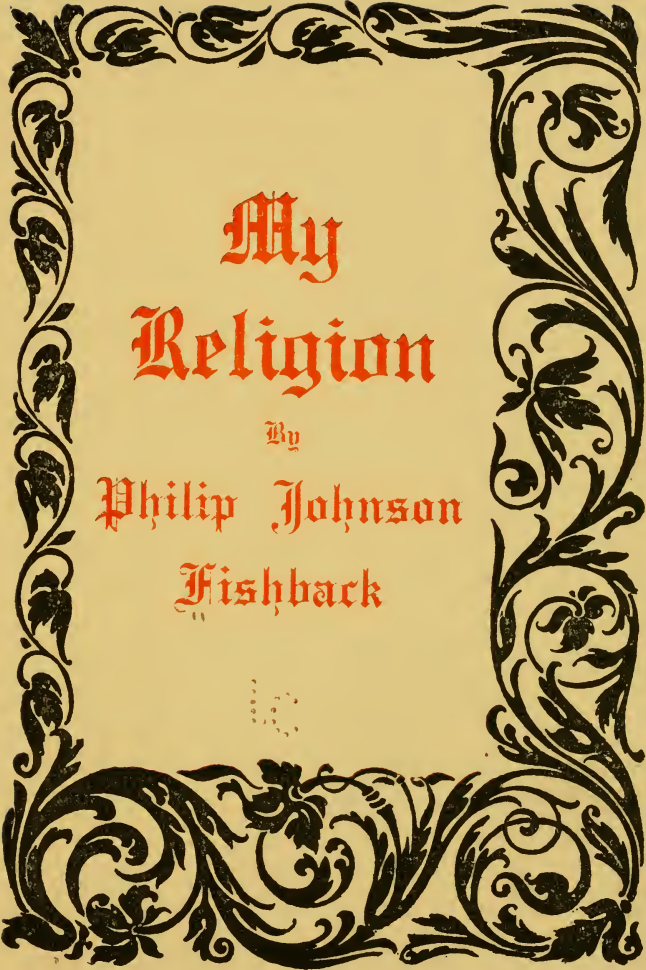
Philip Johnson Fishback











My
Religion
By
Philip Johnson
Fishback

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m. m. l., Mar. 30, 1917

MY RELIGION.

I.

OFT we ask ourselves the questions: "What the great
creative plan?"
"How and when first came religions?" "What the origin of
man?"

As we slowly travel backward, on the avenues of Time,
Through the valleys of Tradition, and the mystic mountains
climb

Through the map-lost Aztec empires, through the lands of
mosque and dome,

Of the early Aryan races, and the first Turanian home,
Past the pyramids of Egypt, where the mounds on Tigris
rise,

To that grave beneath the ocean where the lost Atlantis lies;
As the writings and traditions of the nations long since dead
Are exhumed from hoary ruins, and by patient scholars read;
As the veil is slowly lifted that conceals the Past from sight,
And as Science lights the darkness of that long, unmeasured
Night;

II.

As we search through ancient records, far as truth or legend
leads,

For the story of Creation and the origin of creeds—
Through the Gospels of the Christian, through the records
of the Jew,

In the Koran, and the Vedas, and the mystic and the true;
Our present great theologies, as will clearly thus appear,
Had their birth in old traditions, and in *ignorance and fear*,
In the times of mental darkness; and when men were rude
and wild;

When the brute was most developed, and the Reason yet a
child;

When 'twas thought that Nature's forces all had *human*
traits and form;

That a god gave out the sunshine, while a demon sent the
storm.

As men feared these unseen beings their own ignorance
had reared,

Soon in vague and slavish terror they then *worshipped what*
they feared.

III.

If we would enslave the *body* we must first enslave the
mind—

The ignorance of the masses is the bondage of mankind.
Men are largely led and governed through “religious” zeal
and hate;

Hence, the rulers and the clergy early merged the Church
and State.

Then they taught the trusting people (and they teach it yet
today,)

That a few are born to govern, while the many must obey;
And when'er the masses murmured, priests and rulers taught
the throng.

“It will all be right in heaven”, and “The king can do no
wrong”;

“Servants must obey their masters”; and “Draw nearer to
the rod”;

“For the rulers are anointed, and have been ordained of God.”
In each struggle of the masses for their rights and better
laws,

An Established Church and clergy have espoused the tyrant's
cause.

IV.

Honest *doubt* brings search for knowledge; knowledge leads
at last to Truth;
Age and time oft prove the error of opinions formed in
youth;
In the onward march of progress, and the widening reach of
Mind,
Creed-bound churches and their clergy have forever lagged
behind;
They have claimed Divine appointment to proclaim a Sacred
Word,
While they've hounded "unbelievers" and condemned them
though unheard;
They have *scoffed* the voice of *Reason*, and have tried to
chain the pen;
They have crucified the Thinkers, and have dwarfed the
minds of men.
The inscriptions on the milestones, guiding Progress through
the years,
Have been written and re-written with the thinkers' blood
and tears;
Yet, the race keeps marching forward—with the thinkers in
the van—
Leaving worn-out creeds and dogmas—working out the
destined Plan.

V.

Though the march be slow and painful, and the Truth be oft
denied,

Yet the Truth at last must triumph, and the Error stand
aside;

Thus in every age and nation have been some who sought
the Light—

Some of grand, heroic courage, and who dared proclaim the
Right;

And for them, on *Nature's* altar, lay a book of wondrous lore,

Filled with Learning's choicest treasures—a profound and
endless store.

Open wide that Book of Nature! There behold the Builder's
plan!

There, in records clear and perfect, read the Message left
for man!

There's the story of Creation—and we well may read with
awe—

For we find no myths nor fables, but that everywhere is Law!
Study well that Sacred Volume! Heed no churchman's
frown or rod!

There's the perfect Revelation! There's the evidence of
God!

VI.

No Immaculate Conceptions, and no miracles are there;

And no man-made gods or devils the confiding throng to
scare.

(Deeds of Christ, Mahomet, Buddha, need no mystic, God-
wrought plan;

For their lives show clearer, grander, as ideal types of man.)
There no hell of endless torments, hopeless screams and
devil's din,

Nor of that blasphemous falsehood of a race conceived in sin!
There no God as savage monster, spreading ruin round His
path—

Breathing vengeance 'gainst His creatures—pouring out His
vials of wrath!

Nature's book has no such record; and a god of hate and rage
Is but the ignorant concept of a past barbaric age.

Mother earth is still an Eden, wherein angels yet might
dwell;

Through his greed and lust and blindness, *man alone has
made a hell.*

VII.

Nature's story of creation is the same within all lands;

It is sculptured in the limestones, and is etched upon the
sands;

It is graven by the glacier, it is chiseled by the stream,

And is printed on the fossils that in hill and valley teem;

It is written on the mountains, with their walls of tilted rock;

In the vast volcanic fissure, and the earthquake's dreaded
shock.

It is seen in ocean corals, and the diatomic shell;

In the growth of complex bodies, and the protoplasmic cell;

In the change of inert matter to the spreading branch and
root,

From the seed-germ's first unfolding to the flower and
ripened fruit;

In the work of Primal Forces, far as finite mind can range;

In the Unity of Matter, and infinity of change.

VIII.

Nature's forces and her records are around us everywhere;

We may see them in the water, in the clouds, and in the air;
In the silent power of sunlight; in the work of frost and ice;

In that strange electric fluid, and the lodestone's weird
device;

In repulsion and attraction—that unknown, atomic force

That gives life and form and motion, and directs each planet's
course;

Through the spectroscope and spectrum, which disclose to
mental sight

Primal elements of bodies, by dividing rays of light;

Through microscope and telescope—which reveal to human
eyes

The endless forms of Littleness and the vastness of the
skies—

From infinitude of *Smallness*, to that vast, abysmal space

Where the *stars* fade out in *darkness* and *Conception* veils
her face.

IX.

From her mountains, plains and waters, in her sky-domed
lecture hall,

Nature teaches of Creation, and the laws that govern all;
In those laws so wise and wondrous, we may trace the
Maker's plan,

And in records true and perfect, read the Message left for
man;

In the countless forms of being, with their endless scheme
and range—

In *Life*—with all its mysteries—and in *Death*—the later
change!

There the Holy Inspirations in their purity are found—

And we well may tread with reverence—for it all is Holy
Ground!

Nature's book has endless problems with the answers yet
unknown—

And when man that knowledge masters, he will stand with
God alone!

Yet, with all our finite limits, and in weakness we must plod,

Who but reads aright from Nature, reads the Message from
his God!

X.

As men grow in mental stature, and their social life expands,
Their environments must *widen* or they burst the swaddling
bands;
While we honor ancient wisdom, and the great, immortal
dead,
Yet *new problems* have arisen—times have changed and
knowledge spread;
Every later generation has been cramped and pinched and
sore,
Wearing outgrown mental garments from the age that went
before.
All the earnest agitations that arise and grow apace
Are but conscience-quickened protests of a mind expanding
race.
Far too long we've rendered homage to old fictions, faiths,
and fears;
Fraud and error ne'er are "sacred" though they live a
thousand years.
Far too much our laws are cumbered with old "precedent"
and "code,"
Till they *fail of right and justice* and become a galling load.

XI.

We have reached that stage in progress when our creeds and
laws must change;

When men's honest thoughts and efforts must have wider
scope and range;

When we need a *new religion*—freed from ignorance and
strife—

For the minds of men are starving for a truthful Bread of
Life.

“Faiths,” “immersion,” and “election,” and a “purgatory”
pen,

Are too trifling for attention from progressive, earnest men;
That we're all “depraved by nature” is a libel on mankind;
And to ask “rewards” from heaven shows a base and selfish
mind.

Let us preach that new religion from a *higher* moral plane
Than craven fear of punishment, or the hireling's hope for
gain;

Let us preach less “hell and torments,” “Noah's flood,” and
“Adam's fall”—

More of God's transcendent *goodness*—through earth's
bounty for us all.

XII.

Let our creeds and laws be fashioned to improve our *social*
plan—

Based on Truth and Love and Justice, and the Brotherhood
of Man.

Let us rise to higher levels—rise above the seething flood
Of our groveling lust for mammon, and the brutish thirst for
blood;

Rise where “vested rights” of dollars hold no Rights of Man
in thrall,

But God’s lavish gifts through Nature are the heritage of all;
Where true manhood—mind and morals—shall be given
merit’s meed,

While no more are place and honors bought by cunning,
soulless greed;

Where religion, linked with Science, Nature’s wondrous laws
shall trace—

Searching out her endless secrets—winning blessings for the
race;

Where the reign of Thought and Justice—told by poet and
by seer—

Shall restore to man his Eden, and will make a heaven here.

XIII.

When we pass into that future, and have done with mortal
breath,
And the conscious, thinking ego has survived the change
called death,
In that realm that men call heaven there will be no streets of
gold,
And no rich in princely mansions and no homeless poor and
old;
There will be no saintly nobles, re-enacting worldly scenes,
Wearing crowns upon their foreheads, aping earthly kings
and queens;
No exclusive, sacred city, walled around with precious stone,
And no throngs of idle angels simply chanting round a
throne.
There will be no cross or crescent—Christian, Moslem,
Buddhist, Jew;
Each the only “true believers,” each the special, “chosen”
few.
Justice then will be so perfect, and the mental view so wide,
All such fictions and distinctions will be quickly swept aside.

- XIV.

Change, development, and action—are the universal laws
That are fixed for mind and matter, by the all-pervading
Cause.

When we've laid aside the mortal, and immortal have put on,
Then will come sublime Progression—and a wondrous mental
dawn;

Earthly mists will quickly vanish from our death anointed
eyes

As the glories of Creation in unending changes rise;
Freed from worldly din and dullness, then our clear, enrap-
tured ears

Will catch the rhythm and melody of "the Music of the
Spheres";

Then will come that feast of *Knowledge*—and that fulness of
the soul,

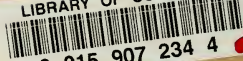
As we learn the Cosmic Order and the laws that all control;
In pursuit of endless Knowledge we'll the highest heaven
find

Learning more and learning ever of the Great Eternal Mind!





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